TOWN & OUNTRY HURCH

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The next issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY HURCH will be dated September, 1954. It published nine times a year.

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Democracy in Religion

WILBUR I. BULL

• Those of you who read the magazine, *Coronet,* probably remember the story of "The Window Over the Sink," which was published in the February issue. That window takes us to Albany, Maine, and to the beginning of the Oxford County United Parish.

Looking out toward the hills, the picture window that is described in *Coronet* is just one bit of evidence of the ministry of Mrs. Hilda Ives in the little church at Albany, Me.

Starting the Parish

It was in 1925 that Mrs. Ives felt she could no longer carry on her work there and called Dr. Malcom Dana, who was at that time secretary of the Town and Country Department of the Congregational Home Missionary Society. (Dr. Dana was a pioneer of the rural church movement and an apostle of the Larger Parish Plan. Through his efforts parishes had been organized in Colorado and Aroostook County, Me.)

Dr. Dana went to Albany and, with the help of Mrs. Ives and a few others, evangelized the towns and villages in the vicinity with the gospel of the Larger Parish Plan. People became enthusiastic. So, early in the fall of 1925, representatives of the churches met at North Waterford to talk more definitely about such an organization. And, in November of that year, the delegates met again, adopted the constitution, and the Oxford County United Parish drew its first breath.

The Program

When Dr. Dana talked about the plan he frequently used the expression, "Religio-Socio Program." It was understood, of course, that worship services were to be maintained in the churches, but the churches were not to think of themselves alone. They were to consider the communities as a whole, how they might be helped and life made more abundant.

How can the program of the Oxford County United Parish be described in the limited space allotted to it? The season of the year might be a good starting point, so we'll begin with winter. Some of you have certainly heard of Maine winters! During those months one can do one of two things. One can stay inside the house, stuff up the cracks in doors and windows and den up for the duration—or one can make winter an asset. The people of the Oxford Parish chose the latter.

An outing club was organized and an annual winter carnival became the event of the season. Yes, a carnival with skiing, snowshoe and skating races, its drama, ball, queen, and all the rest.

4-H Clubs and junior choirs were organized, and, of course, there were the proverbial bean suppers. Movies? It was before the days of "talkies" but some of the best of the silent films were brought to the people of the parish. Between reels was a good time to sing.

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Church at North Waterford, Maine

Church at Waterford, Maine

During the summer months there were vacation schools for the children. Transportation was something! One of the school cars traveled over 150 miles each day to get children and take them home. This season brought also the Parish Field Day. Of course there were games and sports on this day, and more than a plenty of eating, but also there was a time when people could sit on the grass and hear some of the leaders from "outside" tell about "better ways of living."

Visiting the Sick

Health has been another concern of the parish. Many have been the trips to clinics and hospitals to have eyes corrected, tonsils extracted. When older folks have been in the hospitals they have been visited, and flowers or books have reminded them that they have not been forgotten by their parish.

Worship Services

During Lent there are always special services, and for each church in the parish a fellowship supper. The purpose of these suppers is to bring the membership of the church together to talk about matters vital to its progress. People have said, "We wish this would happen more often." Yes, the fellowship suppers have been good, and so have our "all-the-parish" services, when all the churches meet for a service of worship on some special occasion.

Especially warming to the heart have been our "all-the-parish" sunset services, held out-of-doors during the summer at some beautiful spot on a hilltop or by the side of one of the numerous lakes. It is good to worship together when the sun goes down, but it seems even more stirring to worship together when it comes up, and the Easter Sunrise Services have meant much to those who have attended. The fellowship around the tables of the Easter breakfast is a high spot, as is the "all-the-parish" vesper communion service later in the day.

Cooperating Churches

You have been reading this and yet may not even know where the Oxford County United Parish is, or what churches are included in it. The parish is located about fifty miles north of Portland, bordered by Bridgton, Norway and Bethel, and is now composed of four churches at Albany, Waterford, North Waterford, and East Stoneham.

Before the days of Mrs. Hilda Ives' ministry, the Albany church was served by student ministers during the summer, and was closed the rest of the year. In the parsonage at North Waterford lived the minister who served both that village and East Stoneham. When the parish was organized Waterford (with South and East Waterford) had one of the oldest federated churches in the country—with Universalists, Methodists and Congregationalists cooperating. Waterford had its own minister when it came into the parish and it seemed that it might benefit least from the united program, but those who have been close to it from the start would say that there have been many advantages. For one thing, it is good for a church to help its neighbors.

Financial Resources

Up to the time of World War II the Oxford County United Parish kept a staff of three ministers, with students to help out during the summer. At that time the staff was cut to two ministers, with summer helpers. This change was necessary for two reasons: not only was there a shortage of ministers, there was also a curtailment of financial resources.

To get the parish established Mrs. Ives had secured a generous pledge from a summer resident. This aid, which was promised for a period of three years, had been continued long past that time but was finally withdrawn at the beginning of the war years.

The parish was also helped in the beginning by small contributions from the state organizations of the Congregational, Methodist, and Universalist Churches. The Congregational Conference has continued to pay the salary of the summer student, but with this exception the churches of the parish are now self-supporting.

Many more things could and should be told about the Oxford County United Parish but the stipulated length of this article has just about been reached. Perhaps another chance will be offered me to tell you about the Larger Parish Plan and why it seems to be one of the best means for strengthening that institution which commands our interest and support, that institution which is the seed-bed of American character—The Country Church.

Christian Ethics and Farm Policy

A series of local church discussions on Christian ethics and farm policy is being developed by the Department of the Church and Economic Life of the National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Designed to meet requests of local churches, and of councils of churches and of church women, the new adult education program will be under the direction of Philip W. van Vlack, now associated with the department under a grant from the Fund for Adult Education of the Ford Foundation.

Mr. van Vlack, a young Methodist layman with experience both as a farm manager and an agricultural economist, will help local church groups plan forums, workshops or study conferences on ethical issues in agriculture and will serve as resource or discussion leader for such meetings. Among the problems that may be examined by local discussion groups are such questions as the ethical issues involved in parity and price supports and in employing migratory farm labor, and the general ethical problems in building farm policy.

The adult education project Mr. van Vlack is undertaking for the Department of the Church and Economic Life is part of a continuing cooperative program with the National Council's Department of the Town and Country Church.

Rural Life Sunday

Rural Life Sunday, the fifth Sunday after Easter, which has its roots in the Rogation Days, is a day set apart for emphasizing the meaning of Christianity for rural life; for the invocation of God's blessing upon the seed, the fruits of the soil, and the cultivators of the earth; for the consideration of justice for agriculture and the spiritual values of rural life. It was first observed in 1929, at the suggestion of the International Association of Agricultural Missions, and according to plans adopted by the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and many religious bodies.

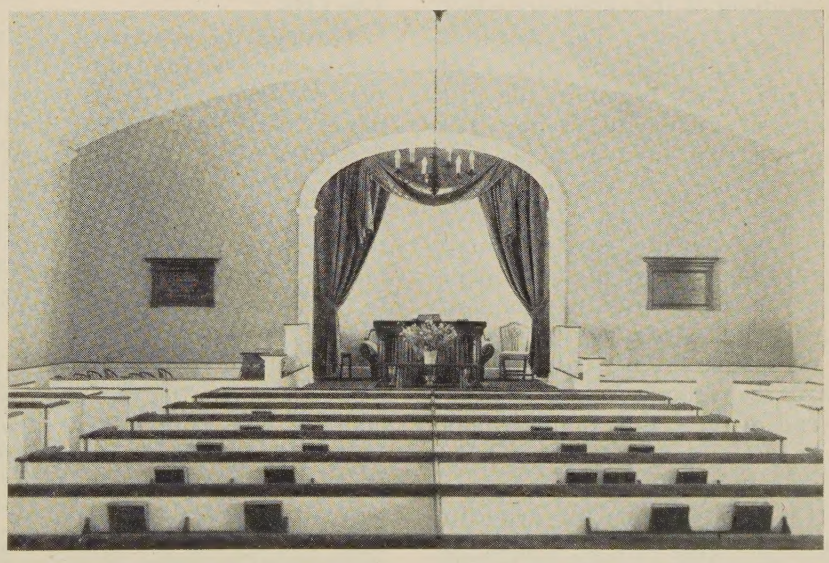
Rural Life Sunday will be observed in 1954 on May 23rd. The Department of the Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches has again made available an order of service suitable for use by a congregation. The order of service for 1954 was prepared for the Department by the Rev. Wilbur I. Bull, Congregational minister at North Waterford, Maine.

Copies of this leaflet may be obtained from your cooperating home mission board, or from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches, 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies, $2.60. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

For Seasons of Growth

Our Father, we praise thee for the progression of nature's seasons: a season for rest, a season for rebirth, a season for growth, and a season for maturity. As the plant finds its fulfillment in the seasons, O God, so may our spirits grow and mature through the ongoing influences and conditions. May each become profitable to us as aiding our fulfillment in thee. *Amen.*

—Mark Rich



Interior of Church at Waterford, Maine

Rogations at Maranatha

JOSEPHINE DRABEK

• It was a beautiful spring day at Maranatha when we had the Rogation procession and blessing. Nature seemed to have arrayed herself in full splendor for the occasion. The tulips and iris were blooming, the bridal wreath bushes were laden with their delicate white blossoms. Behind the house, the freshly ploughed fields lay in dark brown ridges. Out beyond the barn, the pastures were a gently sloping carpet of rich spring green. All in all, it was a perfect day for the ceremony.

We gathered with a group of our neighbors who had come to participate in the ceremony, and mimeographed copies of the blessing of the fields were passed out.

It was indeed a solemn occasion. Only a little over a year ago, Dan and Mary Cecilia Kane, just married, had settled on their forty-acre farm outside of Loveland, Ohio, which they called "Maranatha"—the Aramaic form of "Come thou O Lord." And now, after a year's work of preparing the land for cultivation, the church in the person of our pastor, had come to bless their efforts, and to ask for an abundance of crops.

From the Beginning

Before beginning the procession, the pastor said a few words about the meaning of the ceremony which was to take place. The Rogation days, he explained, are over 1,500 years old. They began in the fifth century at Vienne in France. The people at that time were facing a public calamity. At the instruction of Bishop Mammertus, a triduum of prayer and penance was instituted, during which the people made penitential processions calling upon God to help and asking the intercession of his saints. This custom soon spread throughout France, and at the end of the eighth century, Pope St. Leo III introduced the practice into the universal church.

"It is a tragedy that this beautiful custom has been lost in so many of our parishes and families," Father concluded. "It is one of the special times during the liturgical year when the church honors the work of the land and sanctifies the fruits of the farmer's labor. The blessing of the fields which the church gives during the Rogation procession has a deep significance in this Paschal time when all things are made new in the resurrection of Christ."

The Liturgy

After Father's words, several of us who had specially rehearsed for the occasion, sang the antiphon introducing the Rogation procession. The procession moved slowly out the door, around the drive and out toward the field of winter wheat.

The air was filled with the ancient and beautiful prayers of the litany. *Ut fructus terrae dare et conservare digneris.* . . . "That thou wouldst vouchsafe to give and preserve the fruits of the earth, we beseech thee hear us." We were now lining up along the east side of the wheat field. The wheat was already about a foot and a half high. It had literally sprung up in the past four weeks and was a waving mass of fresh yellow-green. As the prayers were spoken, the words of the blessing suddenly expanded and became full of meaning for us.

The Link

Through the experience of living and working on the land in the past year, we had come to see more and more clearly the intimate link between the life of the church and the cycle of the land. The liturgy had given significance and dignity to all our work on the farm, and our life on the land had opened new vistas to our understanding and appreciation of the liturgy.

Some of our rural experiences harmoniously blending into the experience of the church year flashed across my mind. It seemed only a short time ago that we had first begun to prepare the ground for the seed. During the pre-Lenten season, we spaded and raked a patch of gardens for the early vegetables. Then came Lent and we began to sow the seed. Hand in hand with the sowing on the land was the sowing of Christ's words in our lives through the seed of the Scriptures. In Passiontide, we were planting the gardens in earnest. How easily our minds turned to the thought of the crucifixion as we knelt over the furrows, dropped in the tiny seeds and left them to rot and die. "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." And in each of us, new life, new spiritual youthfulness was born. In nature the first green sprouts appeared above the ground and everything seemed to burst into blossom. "Behold I make all thing new."

And now, on Rogation day, the sanctifying power of Christ's resurrection was reaching out even to these fields and gardens in which we worked. They too were being made new in the Easter life of the risen Christ.

The procession now turned back toward the house. And in our hearts we sang with joy, "We thank you, Lord, that we have the privilege of cooperating with you in the creation of new life on the face of the earth. And most of all that we have the greatest privilege of cooperating with you in bringing forth of new life, your Life, in ourselves and in the hearts of men. *Amen. Alleluia.*"

—Reprinted from a leaflet, published by The National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

The 1954 Convocation

• The eleventh National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country will be held this year at Salina, Kansas, October 26-28.

The Convocation is held annually under the auspices of the Department of Town and Country Church of the Division of Home Missions, National Council of Churches.

The program of the 1954 Convocation and detailed information regarding registration and housing will be published in the September issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. Many of the denominational boards will distribute programs.

Town & Country Church

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Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

The Road is Our Fate

CHARLOTTE COLLINS

• We are Spanish-speaking Texans, people of Mexican ancestry, but Texans first. The road is our fate for we earn our living by following the crops. Each year we set our faces north, west and east as we come to you, traveling across the ribbons of highways in our battered, jostling trucks to the waiting fields which lie near your towns. Your land is rich, but it must wait for our hands to harvest its richness.

The Fields

We come bringing eager hands. We kneel in the earth, and the sacks fill up, bulging with their shining contents of fragrant onions. We bend in the sun, and the knife blade flashes as we deftly cut the tender green of asparagus. We stoop where the cotton is white, where tomatoes are red and the sugar beets lie waiting in the row. We kneel, we bend, we stoop and we reach, reach high on the stalk for the yellow of sweet corn, high on the branch for the shining shapes of firm apples and pears. Wherever we go the sacks and the boxes and the hampers fill up, overflowing with goodness. All this is so because we come to your towns and your fields with our hands.

Our Homes

Each night we ride home to the camp near our work, unloading ourselves and our weariness at the end of the road. Our cabin waits for us, the first one in the third row, small and brown and just like all the others. Our children wait too, if they have not been with us in the fields, and then there is dinner to be cooked and water to carry. The day is over, and the smell of coffee, beans and tortillas fills the air mingling with the soft, low murmur of Spanish and the idle notes of Juan José's guitar.

Each year we come to you, drawn by the tides of seedtime and harvest, and your need for our hands. We come to you, with some of us too young to measure time or know the places we've been, and some of us remembering by saying, "My baby was born in potatoes and got sick when we started to the cherries." Our ages are many, but all of us bring dreams and hopes with us, and an ever-present loneliness, for we are strangers in each new harvest to which our trucks go.

We have not worked many days near the town before we notice something new in our camp. One morning a station wagon drives in, and two missionaries get out. They smile and begin to talk to the children in Spanish. These missionaries unload many things from their car and put them in a room where there are tables and chairs. Some of us help them, and we are glad because they tell us there will be a little school there for the children.

Christian Helpers

The first day of the school the children all tell their names. Victoria, Robertó, Rosa—the missionary writes them out. Then a church lady, who has come from the town to help the teacher, pins the names on. Soon the children are singing each morning at the school, timidly at first but with a real joy later when they learn the tune and words. The missionary tell them many stories about Jesus, and they are glad to hear that he especially loved the children. Each day there is a time for making things together at the school. By working with paints or wood or clay our children know the joy of creating something beautiful with their hands.

There is much fun and laughter at the school as the children play games together. Sometimes they learn a game in English. Sometimes they teach the missionary one in Spanish.

Soon it is time for them to line up outside underneath the big tree for something good to drink. We learn

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that a nearby church is sending milk each morning to the school. There are crackers or cookies too, and the lady who fills the children's cups always smiles and tells them to come back for more.

The children wish their school in the little room would last forever. When the missionaries go away each day, they crowd around the station wagon asking, "Do you give school tomorrow?" And everyone is happy when the teachers say "Yes!"

Learning New Things

Somedays when the missionaries drive into camp their car is filled with big boxes of clothes. They tell us that our friends in the nearby churches have sent these things. All of us hurry to see if we can find something that fits four-year-old Pedro or the new baby, or perhaps there will even be a good black dress for one of us to wear when we go to town.

If we cannot find clothes to fit us in the boxes, we can make something for our families in the sewing class. For in the afternoons in the school room there are ladies from the town churches who help us cut out material and sew. There is real satisfaction in our hearts as we see the machine whirring through the soft blue material for a boy's shirt, and our friend from the church shows us how to pleat the folds of a flowered feed-sack dress.

In the evening when the sun goes down and there is a soft breeze in the air, we gather outside at the camp for movies brought by the missionaries. The children always sit so close to the screen that they can almost reach out and touch the pictures as they flash by. Soon laughter fills our throats and the night, and in the square of moving light we forget our tiredness and that we are far away from home.

The Churches

It is difficult for us to have a tie to any church, because we travel so much, and we find that we have an unfilled longing for God in our hearts. We are glad when the town churches invite us to their worship and even send their cars to take us in on Sundays. It is good to meet with our neighbors in these churches and find that language, the color of one's skin or the fact that a man works with his hands makes no difference when we all meet to praise God together.

Serving Milk at Child Care Center, Harlingen, Texas

We came to the camp as strangers, but we do not leave so, for the churches have welcomed us. They have given us the cup of cold water, but more than that they have brought good tidings to us, who were poor. They have given us a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning.

Neighbors

Each year as we leave and our trucks roll on to other harvests, we hope that the people in the town will not forget us. The roads and the rows stretch endlessly before us wherever we go, and we shall need their caring and their love to walk beside us.

We are Spanish-speaking Texans, some of us young, some of us old, and we come each year to your towns when the fields lie ready for our hands. We come, and in a little while are gone. But we will come again, though perhaps with different faces, as surely as seedtime and harvest roll around. When we come we shall look to you to be our neighbors and our friends. For did He not say, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

Silent Praise

O Thou, who givest to the woodland wren
A throat, like to a little light-set door,
That opens to his early joy,—to men
The spirit of true worship, which is more
Than all this sylvan rapture: what a world
Is thine, O Lord!—skies, earth, men, beasts and birds!
The poet and the painter have unfurled
Their love and wonder in descriptive words,
Or sprightly hues,—each, after his own sort,
Emptying his heart of its delicious hoards;
But all self-conscious blazonry comes short
Of that still sense no active mood affords,
Ere yet the brush is dipt, or uttered phrase
Hath breathed abroad those folds of silent praise!

—Charles Tennyson Turner

Spanish-American Migrant Worker

Discussion Guide on Farm Policy

The National Council's Department of the Church and Economic Life, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., has published a series of questions for groups or classes wishing to discuss objectives in farm policy and the responsibilities of individuals and churches. This is an insert to accompany the Preliminary Study of the Churches and Agricultural Policy, which is a "tentative formulation" by the Department of the Church and Economic Life, which solicits reports and recommendations from church groups studying the issues involved.

The preliminary study outlined central Christian convictions, and then dealt with "major objectives of agricultural policy which commend themselves to the Christian conscience." The objectives elaborated in the preliminary study were:

"1. Opportunity for the full and wholesome development of persons.

"2. Conservation of nature's resources and their development for the legitimate uses of mankind.

"3. Adequate and healthful diets for all the world's people.

"4. Reasonable stability of agricultural income at levels representing a fair reward to the producer.

"5. Encouragement to voluntary organization and mutual aid among farm people.

"6. Preservation of the integrity of the farm family and the enrichment of rural family life.

"7. Recognition of human interdependence and inter-relationship on a national and world scale."

The concluding paragraphs are as follows:

"We affirm the following guide posts for a Christian approach to the problems of agricultural inter-relationships:

"a. Every aspect of agricultural policy should be examined for its impact upon the general economy, both national and world-wide. Programs which seek to advance the interests of agriculture at the expense of other groups or other nations should be shunned.

"b. Christian farmers, through their churches, their farm organizations and their political parties should work not merely for the welfare of agriculture, but for long-range economic and political objectives which will further the total public interest.

"c. American farmers and farm organizations should support sound programs of land reform wherever needed in our own land, but especially in other parts of the world where agrarian unrest is on the increase.

"d. American policy should give both moral and financial support to such international agencies as the United Nations and its Food and Agricultural Organization. We should also continue our policy of gradual but steady lowering of tariffs and removal of barriers to international trade. Programs of technical and economic assistance to underdeveloped areas should be promoted with vigor.

"e. In times of agricultural surplus, we have a moral obligation as individual Christians and as a nation to share our abundance. In times of agricultural shortages, we face the same Christian obligation to reduce and try to eliminate hunger and distress as to share abundance when we have it."

Grange in Historic Building

The Grange Hall at Albany, N. Y., is a building that was originally dedicated by a Bishop sent to this country in 1771 by John Wesley, father of Methodism.

The Rev. Francis Asbury, who was ordained by John Wesley, was the first Bishop of the Methodist Church in America; and it was Bishop Asbury who dedicated the former church in which Asbury Grange now holds its meetings. From that time on the church and vicinity were known as Asbury, in honor of the Bishop.

In 1916, farm folk met to organize a Grange in Asbury. Immediately after the officers were installed a committee was appointed to find a permanent home for the Grange. After three years of renting the Asbury Methodist Church at $2.00 per meeting (deductable from the purchase price) the church was deeded to the subordinate.

The noble old church stands today, a staunch and sturdy building which, while not completely filling its original purpose, yet is dedicated "to the common good."

—From *The National Grange Monthly*

Comments on the Farm Programs

DON F. PIELSTICK

• Eight letters, discussing governmental farm programs and people's reactions to them, have reached my office. Before trying to summarize them comes the admission that solicitation for these opinions came from the office of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

The Farmers Speak

In retrospect, it seems that most farmers appreciate the recognition of the Federal Government "that agriculture is the basic industry of all society," and that "an adequate farm program is the concern of every American—for all of us want to eat." While every farm program seems to have its drawbacks in the form of controls and regulations, "the farmer has traditionally acted toward government as though he really believed it is 'of the people' and 'for the people.'" If we had not come to accept the "checks and balances" of a democracy there might have been more fear and resistance.

"The average farmer is in accord with the whole Farm Credit Administration." Such programs as the F.H.A., P.M.A., S.C.A., and R.E.A. have been "taken for granted as good"— while "everyone realizes some weaknesses, there is a fairly genuine feeling of appreciation for the overall program."

In evaluating these programs it is often overlooked that there has been a tremendous farmer response. The farmer "has taken certain responsibility in transferring management from the government." Farmers' organizations, including the cooperatives, are in a stronger position today. What happened in the setting up of the Federal Land Banks is only one illustration of the increased acceptance of responsibility by farmers.

Pastors' Opinions

Comments on personal impressions of these programs are almost entirely favorable and seem to be qualified only by what one believes is important. Most comments ran about like this:

"Price support for the farmer is as sound as subsidy for railroads, airlines, newspapers"—or, "the farmers haven't received more aid or subsidy than industry, transportation, communications." However, there is no confidence that a satisfactory solution has been found: "Parity is very awkward and we must search for a more workable method."

Agricultural Economics

The essentially distinctive nature of agricultural economics must be at the center of any program if it is to prove satisfying. "The farmer does not operate a business in which supply and demand have any significant effect upon each other. The individual farmer will always work at full capacity to produce all he can of whatever crops are best suited for his climate and soil, his labor and machinery resources. He will do this regardless of the prices he receives. His enterprise is so constituted that even when he is going broke he is better off producing all he can than if he were to cut acreage or put fewer seeds in the ground. Government price supports do not produce surpluses. They just take the surpluses which would exist anyway off the farmer's hands."

At this point, value standards raise a fundamental question. What is the economic status of those who hold the surpluses? If a farming enterprise fails to return a profit as a business, that is one thing. Let the profit seekers turn elsewhere. But if farming as a means of making a living, of providing essential food and shelter, medical care and education, fails—then a blow is being struck at the foundation of our nation and the Federal Government must act. Such action would be considered an action in defense of our nation. "It is worth the price of several battleships."

Price Supports

Price supports have held an important position in the present program. All "commentators" recognized price supports as a method rather than a goal. One man interviewed ten farmers. Those having heavy financial obligations to meet wanted some assurance that they could be met—parity, high-support prices, etc. Those who were in the clear financially were more inclined toward flexible support prices. And, as usual, there were several who didn't realize they had benefited from a farm program and spoke for no interference. Other farmers are "disturbed by the recession" and feel "let down recently."

Emphasis to Be Adopted

These writers set forth principles which they believe should guide the formulation of the farm program: 1) "Farmers should produce at a maximum to meet world needs." "There is no surplus of food as long as there are hungry people in the world . . . there is only an unbalance of purchasing power and means of distribution." 2) "We must produce food supplies in a way which will conserve our land resources for future generations." 3) The family farm should be "the key unit in American agriculture." "The government farm program should attempt to strengthen the farm family as a social and economic unit." 4) "Government policy must assist the low-income farmer" so that he experiences a reasonable degree of opportunity.

New Subscribers to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH

The South Dakota Methodist Conference has voted to organize a rural fellowship unit which will be affiliated with the National MRF, the Christian Rural Fellowship, and the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches so that publications of all will be received by the individual members as an aid to promoting rural church developments in South Dakota. Membership will be promoted by Ralph Williamson, Holman Cowherd and Lowell Nelson.

Scarritt College Trains Rural Workers

ALICE COBB

Race Relations Night. Center-right—Ratna Sudershenam

"This is the first time that anything as wonderful as this has ever happened at Brentwood," said Mr. Green, as he looked around his church with pride and joy. The occasion was a "Race-Relations" service at Brooks Memorial Church, at Brentwood, Tennessee—a village near Nashville. Brooks is a rural Negro church, and Mr. Green is the lay leader of the area.

Renewal

There were many reasons for Mr. Green to be proud. The church really was beautiful. The walls and woodwork were freshly painted. A new green damask hanging made a beautiful background for the gold cross on the altar. The floor had been scraped and polished. Only three months before, however, the plaster was falling off the walls, the woodwork was grey with layers of grime, the roof leaked, and the floor quivered.

There were visitors on that Race-Relations night. They had come from far places—Japan, Korea, Mexico, India, South America. They had also come from the church for white people at Brentwood. The people of the "white church" had joined in the job of restoring the Negro church. This was especially important if one remembered that no one had cared very much about Brooks church, three or four months before. Nor had Brooks cared much for any of the others, for that matter. They hadn't really known much about each other.

Symbol of Understanding

The redecoration of the building is a symbol, standing for a new spirit and the beginning of understanding cooperation between the denominations and races in the community.

If you should ask the Brooks Memorial people what happened to get all this started, they would tell you it was because Miss Ratna Sudershenam came to help them. If you should ask Ratna, an Indian student, she would say it was because Scarritt College sent her to people who were willing to use help. If you should ask Scarritt College, you might be told that the Brentwood story is one which has been repeated somewhat differently in many rural churches near Nashville, where Scarritt students for many years have done field work as part of their college training for rural missions.

The Rural Mission

It is difficult to define this position of a rural worker, because in the some seventy rural projects sponsored by the Methodist Church, no two are alike. Some are in the open country, some in the southern and western mountains, some among the Louisiana bayous, or the islands in New England lakes. There are rural projects among Negroes, Indians, Spanish-speaking people; and among farmers, fishing folk, timbermen, migrants, coal miners.

There is no typical rural job. The rural worker is a general practitioner who looks at life, religion and society as of one piece. The worker joins hands with all the professional resources in the area surrounding the church, as well as the social and spiritual resources within the church organization, in the job of strengthening the church and of carrying that strength to the building and bettering of the community.

Preparation

Scarritt offers a two-year preparatory course for the rural worker, leading to the degree of Master of Arts. One year is devoted to a general core curriculum, including such basic studies as philosophy, religion, church history, religious education, social group work, music and speech. All Scarritt graduate students, regardless of what professions they are preparing to enter, are required to have this prerequisite.

There is, of course, a nexus of suggested courses. Religious education, social group work, sociology, anthropology, Bible, missions, recreation and craft skills are all taught at Scarritt. At the nearby Tennessee School of Social Work the student may study social casework and social dynamics. Courses in education may be had at Peabody Teachers College. At the Vanderbilt School of Religion the student will find courses in theology and philosophy. Scarritt believes that each student will plan

his program according to what he needs and wants, and expects to do in the future.

Field Instruction

Similarly, the college offers a variety of direct field experiences in and around Nashville, and in centers or on charges sponsored by the church in other areas. The field instruction program, looked upon as the heart of the Church and Community major, is its only specific requirement, and the student preparing to be a rural worker must have at least one year of practical work under supervision. He is advised to have two years of field work, if possible.

Although most of the field instruction is arranged by the college, a significant opportunity for social work field instruction is available, through cooperation with the Tennessee School of Social Work.

Field Experience

Scarritt presents three programs of field instruction in church centers or on charges.

For the beginner, a "concurrent" placement is arranged in a nearby rural church, or on a charge. The student meets most of the appointments on Sunday, participates in programs where there is need for help, and wherever possible relates these church responsibilities to community activities outside the church.

A second, more advanced opportunity is called the "week-end program." On such an assignment the student spends each week in the community where he is working, lives in the home of one of the church families, and does a semi-professional job, with modest financial remuneration as well as graduate credit. The week end is spent in getting acquainted with the people of the church and community, working to strengthen different organizations of church, relating the work of the church to that of other denominational groups and to the secular activities of the community.

The third field instruction opportunity which the college offers is a two or three month placement, and may be arranged in any part of the United States. The student works under the supervision of a professional rural worker of the church in that center, one who understands the Scarritt program and will give the same kind of supervisory training on the job which is offered from the college in the concurrent placements. Usually such work is planned for the summer, and it offers full-time remuneration as well as graduate credit.

Still another type of block field work is available for those who plan to do overseas rural work. This is a two-month period of full-time instruction and field experience, arranged under the auspices of the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is usually set up as a summer program. The appointment carries no financial remuneration, but receives full graduate credit from Scarritt College.

Outreach

Nearly every type of field assignment, concurrent or block, places emphasis on the development of the church, together with the church's responsibility for outreach into the surrounding community. This happens in many ways.

This year one of the rural students has spent a good deal of time in studying the area served by the three churches of her charge. Upon the basis of her research and recommendations, the student who will follow her will move into a community where a groundwork of friendship and information has already been laid for an active job in strengthening church activities and building community relationships.

Two students, working together on a three-point Negro charge, have combined three weak young people's groups into one strong organization, have launched a leadership training program for the entire circuit and area, and have moved toward interracial activities among all church groups.

One student has worked with an intermediate youth group, introducing community, racial, national and international themes into the Sunday programs and services. An interdenominational vocational conference is now being planned.

Another student has confined her activities strictly to building up church organizations, but has informally stimulated community awareness through discussion in all meetings.

No, the rural worker is not a preacher, a director of religious education, a social worker, or a home demonstration agent, but all of these skills are understood in relation to the whole job. For no part of life is outside the circle of the church's responsibility.

In keeping with our belief in the strength of union, we have fostered combined projects among the field workers whose people are not too far apart and, wherever it is feasible, the community groups have planned programs and activities together. One of these is for Rural Life Sunday, which is to be observed at Scarritt and participated in by members of all twelve churches where field students are now working.

Refresher Courses

Wherever the rural workers find themselves, they are not far from the affection and concern of the college. A certain amount of consultative service is available, and from time to time refresher "short term" programs are held on the Scarritt campus to which the workers may come for inspiration, information, further graduate credit, or all three.

As one worker said, writing back after a few months in the field: "I look on my job out here as another field experience, bigger and more responsible, but not so very different from field work at Scarritt. I learn something new every day about methods of working. But I never get away from that idea we talked so much about—that our job must be concerned with all the interests which affect the lives of those who make up the church. I can see so clearly now that you haven't really done your job until you have made it possible for your church to grow in a better community, and in a better world."

Transformation

ALLEN W. CLARK

"And the twelve gates were twelve arls," Dr. Edward T. Sullivan once ok for his text. Continuing, he d, "Every gate is a pearl! Every trance into the heavenly life is ough a pearl. What is a pearl? A und is made in a shell. A grain of id, perhaps, gets embedded in the und. Then all the resources of air are rushed to the place where breach has been made. When breach has been closed, and the ocess of repair is complete, a pearl found closing the wound. The eak calls forth unsuspected reirces of the shell, and a beauty apars that is not otherwise brought t. A pearl is a healed wound! No und, no pearl!"

ials into Blessings

Dr. Sullivan went on to show how, our lives, misfortune can be transmed into blessing, hurts changed o pearls of precious value. Even grievous handicap may become a e-saving power.

He tells the story of Nydia, the nd flower-girl in *The Last Days Pompeii.* She had not become ter about her blindness; nor had e sulked and sat at home. She had ne about the business of living, d had earned her livelihood as st as she could. Then came the ful day of the eruption of Vesuis, with "the doomed city as dark midnight beneath a thick pall of oke and falling ashes; the terrorriken inhabitants rush blindly to d fro, and lose themselves in the ful blackness." But Nydia does t get lost. Because of her cross of indness, she had learned to find r way by touch and hearing, and w she can go straight to rescue the e of the one she loves best. By arning to walk swiftly and surely the dark, she had made of her ndicap a treasure and a godsend the dark hour.

"Every gate a pearl!" Every misrtune, every failure, every loss, ay be so transformed. God has the wer to transform all "misforines" into godsends. So Jesus transrmed the Cross from a criminal's badge of shame into the sign of the love of God. Often it takes a wound to transform a denying Peter into a fearless rock of a man.

"No wound, no pearl!" Out of life's buffetings may come our richest rewards.

"Union Churches"

In Pennsylvania there are more than 200 "Union Churches," where a congregation of the Lutheran Church and a congregation of the Evangelical and Reformed Church share a building. (Some of these are more than 200 years old.) Each congregation has a pastor, and worship services are generally held on alternate Sundays by each denomination. (There are Union Churches of other denominations in the state, but not in so large numbers or in so large concentration.)

Under the direction of the Department of Rural Church of the Theological College of Lancaster a study was made of 190 of the Evangelical and Reformed congregations in Union Churches. Most of these were in Pennsylvania, but a few were located in Maryland. All were located in areas of population classed by the U. S. Bureau of Census as rural, and most of them were in the open country.

Church Schools

Only twenty-four of the churches had separate church schools for each denomination—most of them were union. Less than half have church school boards or committees on Christian education. The others operate at the direction of the superintendent or on their own momentum. In 19 per cent of the churches, the pastor had a supervisory relation to the church school; in the other churches the pastor taught a class.

More than half, 64 per cent, of the church schools make contributions of their finances to the Union Church. The others use the money as they wish.

Organizations

There is a Union women's organization in 43 per cent of the churches. In a quarter of these there is a denominational women's group as well as a Union group. Slightly more than a third of the Union groups include a program of study with their social and money-raising activities. Most have monthly meetings, but 19 per cent meet weekly. Of the 190 churches interviewed, there are separate women's groups in 38 per cent of the churches. Thus, there is some organized women's work in 81 per cent of the Union churches.

There are Union men's organizations in 14 of the churches. In another 36 churches there are separate men's groups—none of the latter was ever Union.

Youth work in the churches has a solid history of ecumenical activity, but it does not carry over in any large degree into interdenominational participation in community and county youth activities. There is some youth work in two thirds of the congregations of the Union churches. More than half of the groups meet monthly; 32 per cent of them meet weekly. In general, the programs are organized by the individual leaders.

Community Growth

"Every church has a community function," says the Rev. James M. Hull, pastor of the Christian Church, Fayette, Missouri, and second-year student at the Rural Seminary of Bible College, Columbia, Missouri.

Mr. Hull believes the following practices will be a means of bringing about a spiritual corporation or community:

1. The use of the church as a meeting place for community agencies.

2. Development of a cooperative spirit between community agencies and the churches.

3. Development of an active concern for the needs of the local community.

Says Mr. Hull, "We cannot live fully if we live to ourselves; neither can the church. The church must widen its outlook to include those outside the flock as well as those within. It must become a community-serving agency—not a group isolated from the world."

John Burroughs' Essays

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• "The most precious things of life are near at hand, without money and without price. Each of you has the whole wealth of the universe at your very doors. All that I ever had, and still have, may be yours by stretching forth your hand and taking it."

This was John Burroughs' "message to young friends," in the book *John Burroughs, Boy and Man,* by Clara Barrus.[1] Here was a key to understanding the quality of the naturalist's writing. In this piece I wish to illustrate only a portion of the essays. One might begin, and end, with a few words about the bluebird.

Harbinger of Spring

"The bluebird is a bird without fault. All its ways and sounds and habits and looks are pleasing. It neither eats your fruit like the robin, nor daubs your porch with mud like the phoebe, nor brings a plague of bird lice as the latter often does. It is half-domestic like robin and phoebe without any of their vices.

"It does not awake you in the early morning, nor tease your ear at any time of day with its persistently reiterated notes. As an insect-destroyer it must equal any of them, and as a harbinger of spring it is the most welcome of them all. . . .

"It is a bird without snap or emphasis or sharpness of any kind. I always visualize its note as blue like its back. Its wing gestures are as pleasing as its note. The bird has the quality of the thrush, with a touch of something cerulean. . . .

"From first to last, from April to October, or November, the presence and the voice of the bluebird has the effect of harmony and repose—soothing, tranquilizing. Not a songbird, strictly speaking, it does not strike an attitude and lift up its voice in a definite series of notes, like the song sparrow. Yet its every sound and call is musical, and its every movement harmonious.

"It keeps its tone and quality the whole season. How engaging is the habit it has in late September or October of coming back to its deserted nesting-places and lingering fondly about them!"[2]

Seeking Wisdom

Often, he reports, he walked into the woods and learned nothing new, but he come back refreshed. He was respectful of scientific knowledge but not a worshipper at any shrine named science. "In my excursions into nature, science plays a part, but not the leading part; it is like a silent monitor and friend who speaks when spoken to . . . Love of nature does not depend upon exact knowledge.

"Oh, the wisdom that grows on trees, that murmurs in the streams, that floats in the wind, that sings in the birds, that is fragrant in the flowers, that speaks in the storms—the wisdom that one gathers on the shore, or when sauntering in the fields, or in resting under a tree, the wisdom that makes him forget his science, and exacts only his love—how precious it all is!"[3]

Winter in the Catskills

He reports that, although poets write of birds singing while sitting on nests, he has never heard them. He records that in winter in the Catskills, with snow deep and food scarce, birds not of a feather do flock together. Birds were found in winter only in little bands, each order seeking food in accordance with its necessities. Burroughs could walk for hours in the winter woods and not see a bird.

Then he would come upon a little troop of chicadees, with a few nuthatches nearby, and also perhaps a downy woodpecker. It seems the nuthatches believe there is food near where the chicadees hunt. The chicadee explores fine twigs, the nuthatch goes to trunks and large branches, while the woodpecker penetrates deep into wood for food. Only two or three times in his long life did he find a winter wren in the cold months in the Catskills. He had seen buntings dive into snow banks in order to escape a hawk.

Summer Birds

Nature in August is also, by contrast, the subject of an engaging essay. "Her touch is strong and vivid then." The coarser wild flowers appear, and "moss and intensity take the place of delicacy and furtiveness." He again notes the mistake of poets, who insist the phoebe sings prominently in August. Burroughs' ears hear differently—the phoebe calls most insistently in April and early May. The real August singer is the indigo bird, he says, and cannot recall that the poets have celebrated this bird. The "most noticeable" bird of August in his climate is the yellowbird or goldfinch. In this month, too, the webs of little spiders are spread like "gossamer napkins" upon the meadows.

Hunt birds' nests, but do not touch them, Burroughs counsels. Hunt with your eyes, aided by your field glasses, rather than with your gun. If you by mistake disturb a nest of bluebirds in a cavity near an old trunk of a tree you have moved, the best you can do is to restore the trunk to its former position.

Indoor Studies

"Indoor studies" were also made by John Burroughs. There is an essay on Henry Thoreau. Burroughs remarks the relentless search of Thoreau, and his remarkable powers of observation. Nature in Concord was under Thoreau's surveillance twelve months of the year. But there was more: "He could give the simple fact with the freshest and finest poetic bloom upon it." Also: "Nature was the glass in which he saw himself. . . . All the peas Thoreau loved had been in the pot with him and were seasoned by him." With just one fortunate word, like "split whistle," Thoreau can tell a long

1 1920. New York, Doubleday Doran & Co.

2 Vol. XI of the *Complete Works,* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

3 *Ibid.*

ory. Thoreau watched the ap-
oach of spring the way a compas-
onate doctor notes the approach of
isis in a severe illness.

When Burroughs went to Eng-
nd, he journeyed appropriately to
lborne, famed by the writing of
e country parson, Gilbert White.
e found Selborne in the 1880's not
uch changed from White's day.
he people seemed uninterested in
American observer. Burroughs re-
ad White's *Selborne*. "The style is
e a rich, tender sward, simple and
nobtrusive. . . ." White is so care-
l an observer that his work ac-
uires great scientific value. White
d stimulated many other students.
lborne is a real and a live book.
hite "stands alone" among Eng-
h writers on natural history, Bur-
ughs concludes.

To Work With Him

o God give thanks for blessings
all,
or spring and seedtime, falling
rain;
hat we may all together work
ith Him, and yield of harvest gain.

he wind and rain have milled the
soil
om rocky wastes to meadowed
field;
od's power has turned the rock to
bread;
e wait with hopeful faith the
yield.

ur Father, giver of the earth,
nd everything within it known,
e would but consecrate our hands
work to reap where Thou hast
sown.

—The late Floyd W. Morris

Evangelical United Brethren Hold Convocation

The Evangelical United Brethren
ill hold their fifth eastern areal
onvocation on the Church in Town
nd Country at Crescent Lodge,
resco, Pennsylvania, May 18-20.
he theme of the Convocation will
e "The Redemption of the Town
nd Country Community."

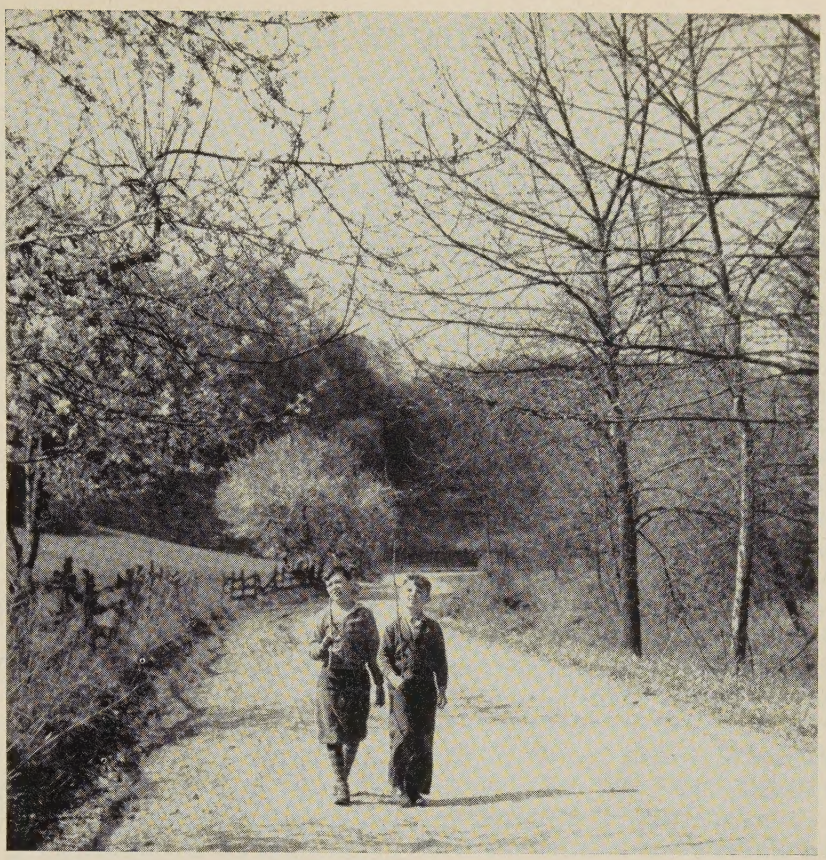

Photo by Eva Luoma

The Kelley Homestead

In 1934, when the old home of Oliver Hudson Kelley at Elk River, Minnesota, was for sale, the National Grange bought it for a memorial to the Grange founder. The farm buildings were repaired and improved, but it wasn't until 1953 that Minnesota Grange members were authorized to refurnish the place as a pioneer home in that state.

A recent issue of *The National Grange Monthly* describes the restoration as follows:

"Carpets were woven from rags sent from Granges throughout the country. Pictures were hung, straw ticks filled, bedding furnished, and other articles placed in readiness for visitors.

"The kitchen draws comment for its fine walnut table, stove of early vintage, the couch with its genuine buffalo covering, kerosene lamps, kettles, sad irons, dash churn, and other kitchenware.

"Through swinging doors the pantry may be seen, with its old glass and china behind glass doors. The old glass and china were given by New England members.

"A second swinging door presents a view of the dining room and the office just beyond. The dining room holds a massive solid walnut hand carved table, with carved high back leather upholstered chairs. Nearby is a curved glass front china closet filled with cut glass, silver, and a dinner set in ancient design.

"The Mississippi River and farm yard are seen through a bay window in the large living room. Here a parlor organ awaits the touch of a hand.

"The several bedrooms include a nursery furnished for a child with several dolls older than the homestead.

"Thus, this shrine to Oliver Hudson Kelley has materialized from the generosity and pride of almost countless patrons throughout the country. The work will go on until the shrine is complete in every detail."

Miss Dorothy of the Ozarks

JANETTE T. HARRINGTON

• A group of young people from the Old Potter Church in Arkansas were attending a district conference for young people at Fort Smith. After their turn had come to tell what they had been doing, they realized their report stood out almost embarrassingly above the others. "Oh, well," said one of the girls, "these other kids just don't have a Miss Dorothy."

As a thumbnail sketch of Miss Dorothy Green of Mena, Arkansas, her comment sums up the situation nicely. A one-woman ball of fire, "Miss Dorothy" applies her energies to every phase of church activity and some community affairs as well.

Potpourri of Activity

Officially, her job, inherited in part from the Rev. J. P. Lester, retired minister who fathered the Old Potter Church, is parish worker of the Presbyterian Board of National Missions for two rural churches at Cove and Old Potter, near Mena, Arkansas. On and off the job, her role adds up to potpourri of round-the-clock activity.

She preaches at morning and evening Sunday services and prayer meetings; makes parish calls; lends support to both churches' monthly guild meetings, a male-included missionary society; helps the young people with their recreational and worship programs. A big share of her time goes to holding weekly chapel services for children and youth in many of the schools in the county. She also broadcasts two local 15-minute inspirational programs; does outside writing and speaking, keeps up a heavy correspondence; and belongs to the local Business and Professional Women's Club, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Harmony Club, county home demonstration group, and—curious but true—the Young Mothers' Circle of the Mena Presbyterian Church. She estimates that last year she delivered 945 sermons and talks.

Dorothy Green's association with Dr. Lester began some years ago in Red Oaks, Iowa, when she gave up a teaching career to assist her hometown pastor and longtime family friend. As a job it was a joy, because she had always regarded him as one of the most gifted preachers she had ever heard.

Suddenly a bout with the flu left Dr. Lester totally deaf—a severe blow to a minister. For a while, he kept up his church, with Dorothy calling the signals to tell him whether he was talking too loud or not at all. But before long he had to give up, and the Lesters went to live on a farm near Storm Lake, Iowa, while Miss Dorothy took a job there as director of religious activities at Buena Vista College.

In 1937, they decided to pack up their belongings and move to the South, hoping to find an opportunity to do what good they could. You may ask—people have—why Miss Dorothy went along to Arkansas, instead of looking for greener fields elsewhere, but to her there was no question; she'd signed on as Dr. Lester's assistant and intended to stick with it.

The Community

Northwest Arkansas is a good place for people of moderate income to retire, but their choice of community was purely accidental. They soon began to perceive a place for themselves. There was no church at Old Potter—only a schoolhouse and a community solidarity that kept people from going into Mena much for church. It was to fill an obvious lack that Doctor Lester began asking people to come up to the house now and then for Bible study.

When the Presbyterian Church in Mena invited the doctor to fill a vacant pulpit pro tem, people at Old Potter wanted to know why he preached in town but not out where he lived. "Well," he explained, "I've never been asked." They promptly asked him.

Soon the inspiring services preach ed by Dr. Lester became a Sunda night feature. Fortnightly, on week night, folks gathered at th Lesters for Bible study followed b folk games.

There was no question of pay ment. But one morning several me showed up and started to fill th Lester's wood bin saying only, "Som folks can preach; others can cu wood." Eventually a Presbyteria church was organized, with member contributing in part to its suppor and through a gift in memory o Mrs. Josephine Meneely of Ne York, a new stone church was buil

Meanwhile the church at Cov lost its pastor and Dr. Lester wa asked to help out. In time, th church—where Morris Goff of Lun and Abner fame was born—becam one of their charges. About thre years ago, Dr. Lester had to give u strenuous activity, and Miss Doroth took over altogether.

"Lady Preacher"

She doesn't recall that there wa any particular furor over th churches' acquiring a lady preache In the Presbyterian Church U. S. A women cannot be ordained, but i special circumstances may carry o the duties of the pastor with th exception of performing the wed ding ceremony and administerin sacraments. She has usually found way to surmount even these diff culties. Many a couple has bee united in marriage in a joint cere mony wherein she reads the servic the doctor ties the knot.

As it turned out, the church wor was to prove to be only about ha of her job; her children's and you programs she regards as perhaps he biggest opportunity. In all, sh reaches an estimated 6,000 childre and young people. Others beside herself point out that this is the onl religious contact many of them hav

Broadcasting

Miss Dorothy's friendly good wi extends to everyone. This neighbo liness really came into its own thre years ago when Station KEN opened in Mena. Because she ha always been interested in radio an

ad some talent for it, she asked the wner to consider a radio program y her. He agreed, and she launched twice-a-week morning program alled "Wayside Chapel," beamed to ousewives.

Then she added a "Children's hapel of the Air," three afteroons, which hit the youngsters just bout the time they were getting ome from school.

Off Hours"

"In her "off hours," Miss Dorothy orks on the writing jobs she takes o "pay the bills." When the Board f National Missions was carrying on ts own training schools in Arkanas, she wrote the daily vacation ible school materials, using all riginal stories.

For all her devotion to folks oung and old, the job Miss Dorohy is doing is not the kind that can e weighed or measured. The only hing that can be said for sure is hat there are two churches active ow where no church was before, nd that quite a number of people ntouched by the church are hearng an inspirational word, with hristian overtones, over the radio nd through the youth's and chilren's chapels.

—Reprinted, with permission, from *The Christian Herald*

New Publications

WHAT PRICE WETBACKS—publication of the American GI orum of Texas (an organization of eterans of Latin-American descent) nd the Texas Federation of Labor, FL. The field investigators were d Idar, Jr., Executive Secretary of he American GI Forum of Texas nd A. C. McClellan, a business man f Rio Grande City. This 59-page eport combines pictures and text escribing the chaotic human conditions on the Mexican border. The situation is observed through the eyes of citizens of Mexican descent, whose difficulties as a minority group are increased by the anarchy in the immigration relationships of Mexico and the United States. 50¢ per copy. 310 Nalle Building, Austin, Texas.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Manner is Ordinary. By John LaFarge. Harcourt Brace and Company, New York. 1954. $4.75.

According to the rule of the Society of Jesus, "the manner is ordinary," whence comes the title of this autobiography. It must be said in all fairness at the start of this review that this is a modest account of an extraodinary career. Father LaFarge is a rare combination in human annals—he is a versatile intellectual with diverse interests and also an apostle. He knows much about music, a number of languages, race relations, and rural life throughout the world.

John LaFarge was born in Newport, R. I., son of the famous artist of the same name. He went to Harvard on the recommendation of Theodore Roosevelt. Later when, contrary to family expectations, he decided to become a Jesuit, it was T. R. who defended the young man's decision and helped to interpret it to his family.

Father LaFarge studied theology at the well-known facilities of Innsbruck, Austria. Shortly after being ordained, he taught for brief periods. Then he was sent to the Maryland Tidewater country, where the Jesuits had had charge of the rural churches for almost 300 years. For fourteen years he was a country priest there. This was before the days of good roads, when there was often travel by water.

The priest did not have very good living quarters, but when he went about there was always plenty of good food and a clean bed. Because of difficulty of travel, the priests were often guests in homes. This distinguished man takes time to record that in a certain community, when a priest entered a front yard a chicken died in the backyard, all of which is not exclusively Roman Catholic practice.

When he went about the Maryland Tidewater, Father LaFarge thought often about the application of the great body of Catholic social teaching to the rural problems of his day. Later he took part in encouraging the compilation of *The Manifesto on Rural Life,* a source book; in organizing the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

He taught the great Gregorian music to the rural choirs. He had a colleague named Kelley who was so much opposed to drinking that he worked with the Methodists and Wayne B. Wheeler for prohibition. He organized special schools for rural Negroes in Maryland.

For some years now Father LaFarge has been an editor of *America,* an influential journal published in New York, which has an interest in matters agricultural. He was once summoned by Pope Pius XI to discuss race relations. He knew the disillusioned Henry Adams, and has talked with churchmen and statesmen of Europe and America. Indeed, the book has at times more to do with the activities and ideas of others than with the dedicated man who moved among them.

—Benson Y. Landis

How to Plan the Rural Church Program. By Calvin Schnucker. Westminster Press. 1954. $2.50.

This book is of a rare variety seldom published in the past. It is a methods book for the rural church. Numerous volumes are written on rural life, in general. Many have appeared describing the abstract characteristics of the rural church. Professor Schnucker is almost an exception since few writers have dared to undertake the difficult task of saying how to run a parish. He has provided rural ministers a useful "tool."

The first third of *How to Plan the Rural Church Program* is devoted to theory of rural life and the church but the remaining pages are descriptions of practical techniques of use to rural leaders. The author understands what he is saying when he writes about how to plan a rural church program. This fact is apparently because he speaks from personal experience. He has been a rural minister and, since 1942, he

(*Continued on page* 16)

"Oh, Come, Let Us Worship"

FLORENCE Z. SANGER

The deep, melodious tones of church bells,
Pealing out from hallowed towers on Sunday morning,
Call us to lift up our hearts in adoration and thankfulness to our Maker.

Yet, day by day, many times a day,
There come to the seeking and loving soul
Reminders of the Creator's love and care.

God's handiwork is shown:
In the changing beauty of the heavens—
In the sunrise, moonglow, starlight, the
Swift-flying clouds, flickering Northern lights,
The slender, gracious arch of the rainbow,
The silver arrows of the rain, the blinding beauty of the snow;
In tossing whitecaps on wind-whipped water;
In mountains' soaring grandeur and the gently swelling beauty of hills;
In the green gloom of forest aisles;
In a lonely tree standing against the sky, golden and rippling in the wind,
In the stark bare beauty of a tree in winter;
In the colorful bounty of laden orchards;
In echelons of geese against grey skies;
In the tender, varied tints of budding leaves in spring.
In the quiet beauty of an old saint's face;
In noble words upon the pages of a book.
Through these, God shows his manifold beauties.

And sounds—the voices speak out clearly:
The ocean's roar, wind in the trees,
The melodious songs of the birds,
The tiny piping of the insects,
The myriad voices of the night,
The killdeer's plaintive cry,
A distant owl calling across the woods,
The crackle of woodfire on the hearth,
The tired footsteps of a loved one's safe return from work,
The elfin, happy laughter of a child,
A mother's humming, tuneless lullaby,
Grave words of love and prayer and admonition spoken from the pulpit,
The sonorous music of the Bible, nobly read.
These also are manifestations of our heavenly Father's handiwork.

Through touch comes balm and comfort:
Dewy grass at daybreak or nightfall,
A bed's caress to weary bodies,
The curling silken tendrils of a child's soft hair,
A wee bird's downy fluff, a kitten's velvet fur,
The deep pile of moss beneath a tree,
A stone's rough strength,
Smooth texture of polished wood,
Mullen leaf and tree bark,
Satiny texture of flower petal and tree leaf.
These too bring a consciousness of God's love for beauty.

God brings us the pungent aroma of sun-warmed pine and cedar,
Of new-mown hay and fresh-plowed ground;
The homely scent of yeast dough rising in the bowl,
The wholesomeness of clean-washed clothes,
The heady perfume of flowers, forest air, keen and pure,
The haunting odor of the salt marshes.
Let our prayers rise with these messengers of heaven.

Even taste contributes its call for praise:
The warm sun-drenched sweetness of honey fresh from the hive,
The opulent goodness of grapes,
The perfumed tartness of wild strawberries, blackberries, huckleberries,
delicate freshness of mint and sassafras,
Home-baked bread hot from the oven,
Corn-meal mush, sturdy and simple, with foaming milk,
Earthy goodness of baked potatoes,
Crisp tonic of wild greens gathered from field and hedgerow.
Truly we are fed from the hand of God.

All these are reminders of our Father's love and concern,
Of his strength and care.
Surely, they say, with unmistakable tones:
"Oh, Come, Let Us Worship!"

Book Reviews

(*Continued from page* 15)

has been teaching theological students in the University of Dubuque where he also engages in rural research and field work guidance of student pastors.

This book has its value partly because of its being based upon a specific region. It has certain limitations for the same reason. Its social foundation is Iowa corn belt culture and northeastern Iowa. The relationships of Mr. Schnucker with his area are sound. He is an outstanding leader in the rural movements of a great farm state. He maintains the most satisfactory relationship between his seminary and the state agricultural college at Ames. Iowa is not the whole story of rural America but it is a vital part of it. It is an important region from which to write a rural church book.

Some of the specific parish planning methods discussed here pertain to leadership, youth programs, religious census, goals for the parish, recreational activities, rural evangelism and multiple-church parishes. Perhaps a most helpful feature is "a suggestion toward a constitution for a cooperative parish." Rural church leaders had better own this book and use it.

—THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

Handbook on Federal Grants-in-Aid. The American Parents Committee, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. 1953. $1.50.

This book contains descriptions of the principal federally-aided programs now in effect, the amount going to each state, and a method of finding out what goes to each community. There is also a guide for making state and local studies of health, education, social welfare, and other services which are supported in part by federal funds. The members of the committee are citizens concerned with the health, education, and welfare of the nation's children.

—BENSON Y. LANDIS